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ABSTRACT

This report describes some of the procedures for helping first-year teachers begin the school year which were used in the Model Teacher Induction Program (MTIP). The first section briefly describes the development of the MTIP, a research-based program dealing with specific issues facing first-year teachers. Section two, which focuses on the beginning teacher, describes classroom management training provided to first-year teachers in the MTIP. The third section, on support teachers, discusses training provided to support teachers in diagnosing and responding to the concerns of first-year teachers, with special emphasis on the first day of school. Section four, on the principal's role in establishing a good beginning, provides information derived from the actions of principals in the MTIP study schools and their suggestions made during later interviews related to helping first-year teachers at the beginning of school. (Author/JD)

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FIRST DAYS OF SCHOOLS: A GOOD BEGINNING

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and
Edmund T. Emmer

R&D Report No. 7206

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Leslie Huling-Austin, Program Coordinator

First Days of Schools: A Good Beginning

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Abstract

For the first-year teacher the first days of school are an especially critical time (Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, Clements, & Worsham, 1982; Kurtz, 1983; Schnell & Burden, 1984). During the first few school days classroom rules, procedures, and routines are established. Often these early established routines have an influence throughout the year on the teacher's ability to manage the classroom. During this critical time, the self-confidence of the first-year teacher can be enhanced by a positive experience or diminished by a negative one. For these reasons, it is important that the first-year teacher be provided with support and assistance aimed at getting the school year off to a good beginning.

The purpose of this report is to share some of the procedures for helping first-year teachers begin the school year that have been developed by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at The University of Texas at Austin. The procedures described were used in the Model Teacher Induction Project (MTIP), a research-based induction program for first-year teachers developed by R&DCTE and piloted during the 1984-85 school year (Barnes & Huling-Austin, 1984; Huling-Austin, Barnes, & Smith, 1985). Educators who assist beginning teachers will likely find some ideas from the MTIP transferrable to their own settings.

Following a brief description of the MTIP, this report is organized into three sections which focus on the first-year teacher, the support teacher, and the school administrator. Section II, which focuses on the first-year teacher, describes classroom management training provided to first-year teachers in the MTIP. Section III, on support teachers, focuses on training provided to support teachers in diagnosing and responding to the concerns of first-year teachers, with special emphasis on the first day of school. Section IV, on the principal's role in establishing a good beginning, provides information derived from the actions of principals in the MTIP study schools and their suggestions made during later interviews related to helping first-year teachers at the beginning of school. The information in this report is not presented as a comprehensive package of everything that can be done to assist first-year teachers with the opening of school. Rather, it is a description of what was done with the small sample of first-year teachers in the MTIP and is offered in hopes that others may find it helpful in contemplating, designing, and conducting other induction programs.

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First Days of Schools: A Good Beginning[1]

Leslie Huling-Austin and Edmund T. Emmer

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Section I: Introduction

The first years of teaching are one of the most difficult and critical period in a teacher's career (McDonald, 1980; Ryan, 1970; Tisher, 1978; Veenman, 1984). It is during this transition time that the teacher begins to develop the skills and habits that form the foundation for future teaching success. It is also during this time that many new teachers get discouraged and abandon their teaching careers. Providing assistance to teachers during their induction period is in the best interest of the teaching profession for at least two primary reasons: (1) to improve the quality of instructional personnel in schools, and (2) to retain more quality teachers in the profession.

For the first-year teacher the first days of school are an especially critical time (Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, Clements, & Worsham, 1982; Kurtz, 1983; Schnell & Burden, 1984). During the first few school days classroom rules, procedures, and routines are established. Often these early established routines have an influence throughout the year on the teacher's ability to manage the classroom. During this critical time, the self-confidence of the first-year teacher can be enhanced by a positive experience or diminished by a negative one. For these reasons, it is

[1]The project presented or reported herein was performed pursuant to a grant from the National Institute of Education, Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Institute of Education, and no official endorsement by the National Institute should be inferred.

important that the first-year teacher be provided with support and assistance aimed at getting the school year off to a good beginning.

The purpose of this report is to share some of the procedures for helping first-year teachers begin the school year that have been developed by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at The University of Texas at Austin. The procedures described were used in the Model Teacher Induction Project (MTIP), a research-based induction program for first-year teachers developed by R&DCTE and piloted during the 1984-85 school year (Barnes & Huling-Austin, 1984; Huling-Austin, Barnes, & Smith, 1985). Educators who assist beginning teachers will likely find some ideas from the MTIP transferrable to their own settings.

Following a brief description of the MTIP, this report is organized into three sections which focus on the first-year teacher, the support teacher, and the school administrator. Section II, which focuses on the first-year teacher, describes classroom management training provided to first-year teachers in the MTIP. Section III, on support teachers, focuses on training provided to support teachers in diagnosing and responding to the concerns of first-year teachers, with special emphasis on the first day of school. Section IV, on the principal's role in establishing a good beginning, provides information derived from the actions of principals in the MTIP study schools and their suggestions made during later interviews related to helping first-year teachers at the beginning of school. The information in this report is not presented as a comprehensive package of everything that can be done to assist first-year teachers with the opening of school. Rather, it is a description of what was done with the small sample of first-year teachers in the MTIP and is offered in hopes that

others may find it helpful in contemplating, designing, and conducting other induction programs.

Model Teacher Induction Project

The Model Teacher Induction Project was a collaborative endeavor of the three program areas of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education: Research on the Improvement Process, Research in Teacher Education, and Research on Classroom Learning and Teaching. Through the MTIP, a research-based induction program was developed and field tested during the 1984-85 school year. This pilot project focused on specific issues facing first-year teachers such as: beginning the school year, classroom management, organizing instruction, and grading and evaluation of pupils. Program staff collaborated with school district personnel to identify and train support teachers at each campus and to provide ongoing technical assistance to both support and first-year teachers throughout the school year.

Prior to the beginning of school, research staff conducted research-based workshops (1) for both support and first-year teachers on teaching effectiveness and classroom organization and management and (2) for support teachers on identifying and responding to needs and concerns of first-year teachers. Needs and interests of the participants were assessed periodically and used to guide the content of additional training and support activities including observations, support meetings, and a workshop on working with low achieving students.

The research related to the MTIP involved the collection of a variety of data--interviews of first-year teachers, support teachers, and building administrators, classroom observations, documentation of interventions, journals--to study effects of the program and add to an understanding of the

learning processes of new teachers. The study sample consists of six first-year teachers and four support teachers in basic academic subjects in two middle schools.

Section II: A Good Beginning for the First-Year Teacher

Classroom management is the most frequently reported problem of beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984), and there was no reason to believe that first-year teachers in the MTIP would be exceptions. Consequently, this area was strongly emphasized during the early stages of the project. The classroom management training activities used in the MTIP included providing participating teachers with a manual, Organizing and Managing the Junior High Classroom (Emmer, Evertson, Sanford, Clements, & Worsham, 1982) and also a workshop on the topic.

The workshop descriptions that follow are intended to help experienced teachers or principals plan effective workshops for beginning teachers around Organizing and Managing the Junior High Classrooms. The manual and its elementary school corollary are available through the R&DCTE.

Description of the Management Manual

The management manual, based on research conducted at R&DCTE as well as on other management research, consists of nine chapters:

1) Organizing your room and materials for the beginning of school
2) Developing a workable set of rules and procedures
3) Student accountability
4) Consequences
5) Planning activities for the first week
6) Maintaining your management system
7) Instructional clarity
8) Organizing instruction
9) Adjusting instruction for special groups

The first five chapters focus on the beginning of the year and emphasize achieving good discipline through preventive strategies, including

appropriate rules, procedures, consequences, good room preparation, and first week activities that promote student involvement and success. The last four chapters deal with maintenance of appropriate behavior, handling inappropriate behavior, and instructional issues that affect management. Some of the concepts that are treated in the latter portion of the manual include monitoring, consistency, clarity, activity design, and special problems associated with low-achieving or heterogeneous classes. Three checklists are provided for teacher use in planning. Throughout the manual the emphasis is on specifying procedures that the teachers can use in the classroom. Concepts are illustrated with examples drawn from observations in earlier research studies and most chapters include case studies illustrating the major concepts described in the manual.

Description of the Workshop

Two workshops were conducted, each for a different group of teachers. The first workshop which occurred on August 10, 1984, involved three first-year teachers and three support teachers who were participating in the MTIP at this time. The second workshop was conducted on September 25, 1984, for two other first-year teachers who were added to the project after the August 10 workshop, both of whom were teaching science. The support teacher assigned to help these first-year teachers also attended the second workshop. The rationale for including support teachers in these workshops was to provide first-year teachers and support teachers with a common framework for talking about classroom management and to establish the support teachers as a resource in this area for the new teachers. The workshops were conducted by different leaders, each of whom was experienced in giving workshops and had participated extensively in the Center's research efforts in classroom management. The descriptions below are based

on typed scripts of tape recordings of the two workshops, and an observer's notes from the first workshop.

The August 10th workshop. This workshop lasted approximately three and one half hours. Participants were each given a copy of the manual at the beginning of the workshop. One first-year teacher noted that she had used the commercial version of the manual in a college course. The content of the workshop, both in scope and sequence, was closely parallel to the management manual. Two types of activities were used: short presentations and discussions. The workshop was organized around nine topics, with from ten to twenty-five minutes devoted to each. These topics and a short synopsis of each are given below.

1. Overview of the research base for the management manual. A brief description of the research program was provided, and the relationship between the management recommendations and research findings was made clear.
2. Description of the manual. Specific features (for example, case studies, checklists) were noted. Teachers were urged not to view the recommendations as recipes rather they would need to adapt them to their own classroom.
3. Room arrangement. Several principles related to room arrangement were presented, along with illustrations on the overhead projector of a well-designed room and a room with arrangement problems. Numerous comments and suggestions were made by the support teachers.
4. Rules and procedures. The leader presented from the manual examples of rules from junior high classrooms and the checklist of procedures was noted. Again referring to the manual, the leader

noted several types of procedures for managing student work. Then the teachers were asked to discuss and identify procedures for students in several areas: tardiness, movement about the room, and what students are expected to do when they complete their work. During the ensuing discussion, contributions were made chiefly by the support teachers who described their own procedures, although new teachers were noted by an observer as attentive. Some variation among teachers was noted by the workshop leader, who made the point that each teacher must decide what is or is not acceptable behavior in different areas.

5. Consequences. Attention was called to the coverage of this topic in the manual. The workshop leader and support teachers gave examples of penalties and rewards appropriate for a middle school setting.

6. Guidelines for the first week. Coverage in the manual was noted again. Major concepts included staying in charge, explaining the rules, giving feedback, room procedures, emphasizing success, seating, end of period procedures, dealing with interruptions, and avoiding dead time. Support teachers provided numerous examples and suggestions.

7. Maintaining appropriate behavior. Three major concepts were emphasized: monitoring, consistency, and promptly dealing with inappropriate behavior. Corporal punishment was discussed but not recommended.

8. Good instruction. The interrelationship of management and instruction was noted. Topics discussed included clarity, pacing, transitions, and gradebook organization.

9. Dealing with heterogeneous and lower ability classes. Relevant sections of the manual were noted. Modifications of activities, use of small groups, and pacing were discussed.

The September 25th workshop. As noted previously, this workshop was conducted for two first-year science teachers, added to the MTIP sample after school began. Also in attendance was the support teacher who was assigned to work with these first-year teachers. All of these teachers taught in the same school. Because of the common subject matter taught by the two first-year teachers, this workshop, although devoted to classroom management, had content and examples couched in science classroom contexts. Also, the workshop leader had an extensive background in science education.

The workshop, conducted as a small group discussion, consisted of two major parts (45-60 minutes each) along with an introduction and a closing (20 minutes each).

1. Introduction. The research background for the management manual was described. An overview of its contents was presented and the preventive nature of many of the recommendations was discussed.
2. Discussion of procedures. The importance of carefully planned procedures in key areas was described and attention was called to lists of areas for planning procedures at the beginning of the year. Teachers were asked to name areas in which their students might be having trouble with procedures. The new teachers' concerns were mainly related to problems of inappropriate student talk. Procedures for regulating student talk were discussed and alternatives were presented by the workshop leader. Another problem mentioned by teachers was students' completion of homework. In the ensuing discussion, the workshop leader called

the teachers' attention to the chapter on student accountability in the manual. Numerous procedures related to managing student work were discussed, along with the recommended procedure of starting the class period with a warm-up activity.

3. Discussion based on a case study. The workshop leader distributed a two-page handout containing a case study of a science teacher's management problems. Teachers were instructed to make marginal notes on areas of difficulty, as they read. The case study illustrated numerous problems in areas such as the transition at the beginning of class, tardy procedures, students forgetting materials, student talk, teacher monitoring, and gaining and maintaining student attention. During the discussion the workshop leader encouraged the teachers to identify problems and to suggest alternate approaches to solving them. On several occasions, the leader suggested specific procedures or redirected the discussion to focus on specific problems. Both first-year teachers contributed frequently. The workshop leader distributed another case study, illustrating effective procedures in many of the deficient areas of the first case study. She suggested that teachers read it later.
4. Closing. In concluding the workshop, the leader made several suggestions, including careful study of the manual, and group planning and sharing of materials and procedures.

Effects of the Training

For purposes of this report, effects of the classroom management training were measured by the responses first-year teachers and support teachers gave to interview questions about the usefulness of the training.

These interviews were conducted approximately two weeks after the August 10th workshop for those participants and approximately four weeks after the September 25th workshop for the remaining participants. The effects of the training will also be evaluated by an analysis of the data from classroom observations, but this analysis was not completed at the time of this report. In the interviews, both first-year teachers and support teacher reported that the training was useful. The following quotes are excerpts from the interview transcripts.

> "I've been just like a drill sergeant. I've been so strict and I'm so glad I started out like that because I can tell them to be quiet and they will. I'm going to stay the way [the person in the workshop] told me to." (first-year teacher)

> Interviewer: "What kind of things were you able to pick up at the MTIP workshop?"
> First-year Teacher: "Arrangement of the classroom, that was a good one...The walk area and where to put books and stuff like that...the traffic pattern."

> "I liked the book. I like reading it. In all honesty, it was very nice to me to be able to read it and say, 'I already do that; I already do that' I already do that,' because that's kind of a stamp of approval on what I'm already doing. If I'm doing what everyone else is doing, maybe I'm doing something right. So that was real helpful." (support teacher)

A suggestion by a first-year teacher for improving the workshop was to distribute the manuals several weeks before the training. Also, as might be expected, some of the new teachers reported being so overwhelmed by the opening of school that they were not able to fully make use of the guidelines offered in the classroom management training. The following quote taken from an interview with a first-year teacher is an example of this:

> "I haven't finished the manual yet. I was kind of scared of it because I knew by the time we got it, school was just almost here and if it did suggest anything I wouldn't have time to do it. Then I'd feel real guiity. I was almost scared of it."

This type of reaction on the part of first-year teachers is consistent with the findings from earlier research conducted to measure the effects of the training on the classroom practice of first-year teachers in junior high settings (Clements, 1985).

Summary

In each workshop, topics presented in the management manual were emphasized and teachers were urged to use it in their planning. Classroom procedures received special emphasis through the use of case studies and extensive discussion. The August 10th workshop was longer and covered each major part of the manual more comprehensively then the September 25th workshop, which emphasized managing science classrooms. The nature of the interaction was also different: in the August workshop most of the contributions to discussion were made by the support teachers; in the September workshop, the first-year teachers participated extensively. In interviews following the workshops, participants rated the training as useful.

Section III: A Good Beginning for the Support Teacher

The role of the support teacher assigned to assist the first-year teacher is an important one. The support teacher can be one of the most valuable resources to the first-year teacher in the difficult transition from student to teacher. In order to be most effective in this role, the support teacher needs to understand the change process and how individuals experience it. Further, the support teacher should have skills and tools to help diagnose the needs of the first-year teacher in order to be able to provide appropriate and prompt assistance at the time it is needed. MTIP staff believe that it is unrealistic to assume that because a person is an experienced, successful teacher that he/she will necessarily have sufficient preparation to work effectively with a novice teacher. For these reasons, training was provided prior to the beginning of the school year for support teachers in the Model Teacher Induction Project.

Understanding the Change Process: The Concerns-Based Adoption Model

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) is a model for change facilitators to use in the planning and delivery of assistance to persons who are involved with an innovation. In CBAM terms, an innovation is considered to be anything that is new to an individual, and a change facilitator is anyone who has a role in assisting another person in developing new skills or practices. The model is applicable to a teacher induction program, because first-year teachers are involved with the innovation of developing their knowledge and skills related to teaching, and support teachers are assuming the role of change facilitators for the purpose of assisting first-year teachers with this developmental process. The CBAM was developed by the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at The University of Texas at Austin based on extensive experience

with the educational change process in school and college settings. The CBAM is based on several assumptions about change.

First, change is not an event, but a complex process requiring a considerable investment of time and energy. Second, each individual experiences change in a different way, at a different rate, and with a different intensity. Third, the change process is not an undifferentiated continuum, but rather individuals involved in change go through stages in their perceptions and feelings about change as well as in their skill and sophistication in practice. An additional assumption is that when those responsible for facilitating change (principals, support teachers, staff developers) have information about where individuals are in the process, they are better able to provide appropriate aid and support to each individual as he or she needs it. Finally, staff developers and other change facilitators need to work in an adaptive, yet systematic way. They need to stay in constant touch with the progress of individuals within the larger context of the total organization that is supporting the change. They must constantly be able to assess and reassesses the state of the change process and be able to adapt interventions to the latest diagnostic information.

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model provides a structure that takes into account each of the assumptions about the change process. Three aspects or dimensions of change form the basic frame of reference of the model: the concerns that an individual experiences related to the change, the actual behaviors or practices employed, and how the change is adapted based on the needs and styles of particular individuals. When these dimensions are considered in regard to the first-year teacher, it involves how the teacher feels about his/her role as a teacher, his/her actual classroom practice,

and which parts of the total teaching repertoire are being utilized in what ways.

Stages of Concern about the Innovation. The cornerstone of the CBAM is the concerns dimension which lies in the assumption that the process of change is a personal experience for each individual. Everyone approaching a change or developing new skills will have certain perceptions, feelings, motivations, frustrations, and satisfactions about the change process and their involvement with it.

The concept of concerns was first described by Francis Fuller. In her research, Fuller (1969) identified a set of concerns preservice teachers expressed as they moved through their teacher education program. These concerns changed from initial concerns unrelated to teaching (I'm concerned about getting a ticket to the rock concert next Saturday night), to concerns about self in relation to teaching (I wonder if I can do it), to task concerns about teaching (I'm having to work all night to prepare my lesson plans for tomorrow), to impact concerns (are the kids learning what they need?). All together, Fuller identified six different levels of concern that preservice teachers expressed at different points in their teacher training programs.

As the concept of teacher concerns was being disseminated, it became apparent that the concept was applicable to a wide audience. This included teachers after they completed their preservice programs and began the process of developing their skills as a teacher in charge of their own classroom, as well as persons involved in implementing various educational innovations. Seven Stages of Concern about the Innovation were identified (see Figure 1). Subsequent research verified that persons' stages of concern move through the progression from self, to task, to impact that

Fuller described. This being the case, Stages of Concern about the innovation provided a key diagnostic tool for determining the types of assistance needed by individuals as they experienced the various phases of a change process.

Description of the Training Provided to Support Teachers

The four support teachers in the MTIP were provided with a half-day of training on August 9, 1984, through a workshop entitled "Providing Assistance to Beginning Teachers."* The focus of the workshop was on diagnosing and responding to the concerns of the first-year teacher, and participants were trained in using Stages of Concern in their work with first-year teachers. A follow-up session was conducted approximately five weeks later on September 17 during which support teachers discussed the current needs and concerns of first-year teachers and ways they might provide appropriate assistance to address these concerns.

The August 9th workshop. This workshop lasted approximately three and one-half hours and was led by a senior Center staff member who had extensive background in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model and its related research. The workshop was organized around a series of five activities that incorporated lecture, discussion, paper/pencil tasks, audio-visual media, and role plays. Participants were provided with a 13-page handout which was used throughout the workshop. A short description of each of the activities is provided below.

*This training can be arranged through the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. Training is periodically available to prepare persons to conduct this support teacher workshop and training materials (transparencies, slide/tape show, training manual and handout masters) are available for loan or purchase. Persons without prior training in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) should not attempt to conduct this training without assistance from an experienced CBAM trainer.

Activity 1: Introduction to the Workshop. The trainer explained that the material to be presented resulted from more than 10 years of research on the educational change process. The objective of the day was the development of tools and skills that enhance understanding of the change process and allow for the provision of assistance to persons who are engaged in change. Using a transparency, the trainer shared a list of CBAM definitions and explained that in the MTIP, support teachers were the change facilitators who would be assisting first-year teachers with the "innovation" of becoming a teacher. Using a focusing page in their handout, participants listed some of the concerns first-year teachers typically have about their role as a first-year teacher. The trainer explained that these responses would be used later in the workshop. Participants were asked to read the Rationale and Objectives of the workshop included in the handout and these were then discussed briefly by the trainer.

Activity 2: Introduction to the Concerns-Based Adoption Model and Stages of Concern. The trainer explained the assumptions of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model. The early work of Francis Fuller with preservice education students which led to the concept of Stages of Concern was described and participants briefly discussed this work. The trainer explained the expansion of this early work into seven Stages of Concern which followed the same developmental sequence of self, task and impact concerns observed by Fuller. A more comprehensive definition of each Stage was provided in the workshop material. After presenting the concept and answering the questions of the participants, the trainer presented a 15-minute slide/tape show on Stages of Concern. Following the slide/tape show, participants were again given the opportunity to ask questions and the

trainer re-emphasized key points. A short break was taken at the conclusion of this activity.

Activity 3: Open-Ended Concerns Statement Exercises. The trainer opened this activity by explaining that there are three ways to obtain concerns data from individuals: by having them respond in writing to an open-concerns statement, by talking informally with them, and by having them complete a formal questionnaire. This workshop focused on the first two methods of obtaining and assessing concerns.

To practice rating concerns, participants were asked to determine which Stage of Concern was represented in items contained in a practice activity. A transparency of the Stages of Concern was displayed on the front screen and participants were encouraged to discuss their answers with a partner. The trainer then discussed the responses with the participants and answered questions about the rating of specific items. Participants then rated paragraph examples of concerns statements. The statements were actually edited versions of concerns statements provided by the first-year teachers in the MTIP. The trainer demonstrated the process to be used for rating paragraph statements and again encouraged participants to work together on the task. The answers to these examples were then discussed. Participants were then instructed to score the concerns they had written earlier in the workshop. The trainer then led a discussion about these concerns and helped the participants generate interventions that would be appropriate to assist a first-year teacher with these concerns.

Activity 4: Practice Interviews for Stages of Concern. The trainer introduced this activity by explaining that in the previous activity, written statements of concern were used for rating and that a second way to

assess concerns is by conducting an informal "one-legged"* interview for concerns. In order to develop skill in concerns interviewing, this activity included practice interviews. Participants were supplied with a list of questions to use when interviewing for concerns. Detailed instructions for conducting the practice interviews were provided. The participants were divided into pairs and one was to assume the role of a first-year teacher, while the other was to be the support teacher. The "first-year teachers" were provided with a specific role; the support teacher was to use the suggested questions to identify concerns and then to provide some type of appropriate assistance. When the first practice interview was completed, the trainer led a short debriefing discussion and then instructed participants to switch roles and repeat the process. The new "first-year teacher" was provided with a different role. Again the trainer led a short debriefing discussion to conclude the second practice interview.

Activity 5: Workshop Conclusion and End-of-Day Evaluation. The trainer emphasized that the skills presented in this workshop would not only be useful in assisting first-year teachers, but could be useful to anyone who was involved in a change process. The trainer explained the Concerns-Based Adoption Model and that Stages of Concern was just one of three diagnostic dimensions of the model. Participants were provided with a list of references related to the Concerns-Based Adoption Model and Stages of Concern. Finally, participants were asked to complete and turn in the end-of-day evaluation.

September 17th follow-up session. Approximately five weeks after the initial training a follow-up session with the participants was conducted by

*The one-legged interview derived its name because it is often conducted in an informal manner as two people talk together as they walk.

the trainer of the original workshop. During this follow-up session which was held after school from 4-5:15 p.m., the trainer provided a handout of the Stages of Concern and reviewed concept briefly. Support teachers then participated in a discussion about the needs and concerns of the first-year teachers in the MTIP and shared suggestions for types of assistance that would be helpful to the first-year teachers. Support teachers also focused on their own concerns both as teachers and as facilitators in MTIP. At the conclusion of the session, support teachers were given a Support Teacher Notebook entitled "Working With a New Teacher." The notebook consisted of nine topics related to teaching and focusing questions for each topic to help the support teacher assess the needs and concerns of the first-year teacher. Space in the notebook was provided for the support teacher to record information pertaining to his/her work as support teachers and the interest, needs, concerns and progress of the first-year teacher assigned to him/her. The following is a list of the nine topics and the focusing questions related to each.

1. Classroom Management. Does the first-year teacher have problems getting classes started promptly, keeping students on task, giving suitable rewards (and penalties), maintaining an atmosphere for work, establishing routines, keeping classtime moving smoothly, etc.? Is she/he in control of student conduct?

2. Organization of Instruction. Does the first-year teacher present material clearly, in an organized and systematic fashion, with appropriate examples and instructional materials, giving attention to all or most of the students in the classroom? Is there a balance among instructional strategies? Are interests of students taken into account during instruction? Does the teacher provide ongoing feedback to students? Are transitions smooth and rapid?

3. Time Management. Is there enough time to accomplish everything planned for the class period? Are paperwork and administrative detail handled efficiently? Does she/he spend time in the evenings and on weekends keeping up with paperwork? Does the first-year teacher appear to be physically (and emotionally)

drained or tired? Has she/he thought through plans for getting the work done effectively?

4. Curriculum Planning. Is the first-year teacher prepared for the day's instruction? Are materials ready and available? Is there attention given to planning for relatively long periods of time (as opposed to single lesson planning)? Does she/he talk about planning and using the plans in an orderly and systematic way? Is the planning realistic in terms of curriculum requirements and student abilities?

5. Curriculum Knowledge. Does the first-year teacher have a firm grasp of the knowledge required for the subject area? If there are gaps in the knowledge, does she/he recognize and know how to fill them?

6. Working with Colleagues. Is the first-year teacher comfortable around his/her colleagues? Is she/he developing professional (as well as social) relationships with other teachers, administrators, and support staff? Is she/he included in formal and informal groups in the building? Does the first-year teacher use the school and district's human resources in dealing with teaching issues?

7. Instructional Materials. Does the first-year teacher know where (and how) to obtain the best available materials for instruction? Have other teachers shared materials with him or her? Does the first-year teacher indicate a sense of what instructional materials are most appropriate for the students, the curriculum, and his or her instructional style?

8. Relationships with Parents. Is the first-year teacher "comfortable" with parents? Does she/he appear to have the support of parents? Has she/he been helped to understand the school's "protocol" in terms of parent conferences, informal contacts, and so forth?

9. Evaluation, Grading, Reporting. Does the first-year teacher know the standards applied to student grades? Does she/he understand the relation between grading and evaluation? Is she/he clear about the procedures used to arrive at grades? Is the first-year teacher aware of the subject/grade level expectations about grades? Is the first-year teacher able to interpret grades to students and parents?

Effects of Support Teacher Training

The effects of the support teacher training were measured in two ways--evaluation forms support teachers filled out at the conclusion of the August 9th workshop and their responses to later interview questions about

the usefulness of the training and the support teacher notebook provided September 17th. No attempt was made to observe or document the support teachers' actual practice related to the use of knowledge or skills presented in the training. On the evaluation of the August 9th workshop, participants rated the workshop as highly interesting, relevant to their needs, informative and well-organized. All of the participants indicated that the pacing of workshop activities was appropriate. Support teachers commented that learning about Stages of Concern and being able to dialogue with other support teachers were among the most valuable features of the day. In response to the question on the evaluation regarding whether there was anything that was not useful, participants indicated that it was all useful, but that the role-playing activity was their least favorite.

An interview was conducted with support teachers two weeks after the August 9th workshop, and support teachers' responses to questions about the usefulness of the training were quite positive. The following quotes are excerpts from the interview transcripts:

> "I thought it was very beneficial and pertinent."
>
> "I just thought they (both workshops) were really well-organized...The best thing I've done in education in years."
>
> "It was interesting and I enjoyed it and felt it was worthwhile. It also gave me some ideas since we worked with experienced teachers, how other people have done things and handled things; so a lot of the individual teacher's input was real good. The discussion time was real beneficial and it was motivational and that's what we always need before school--motivation!"
>
> "I liked the workshop where we learned to pick out the management problems of first-year teachers. I'd never seen that before. I shared that with my husband, and he has used it on some of his people. So, that was real interesting, because a lot of people get stuck in self. You don't really understand that that's what's happening to them, in the personal level..."

The one negative comment about the workshop was from one teacher who was strongly opposed to doing role-plays, although generally she thought the workshop was valuable.

In later interviews, support teachers were questioned about the usefulness the support teacher notebook provided to them on September 17th. The consensus of the support teachers was that the topics and the focusing questions provided were helpful to them in thinking about the areas in which first-year teachers might need help, but none of the teachers had actually used the notebook to record in writing the specific concerns of their first-year teachers. All of the support teachers indicated lack of time as their reason for not completing the notebook.

Summary

Support teachers in the Model Teacher Induction Project participated in two sessions aimed at developing their skills in diagnosing and responding to the concerns of beginning teachers. A three and one-half hour formal training workshop was held prior to the opening of school and introduced the teachers to the concept of Stages of Concern. During this workshop, support teachers participated in a variety of activities designed to allow them to develop and practice their skills in diagnosing and responding to concerns of beginning teachers. Approximately five weeks after the initial training session, a follow-up session was conducted to allow support teachers the opportunity to discuss the current concerns of the first-year teachers and to share ideas with each other about appropriate interventions to address these concerns. At this meeting, support teachers were also given a Support Teacher Notebook which included various categories of teaching practices and related focusing questions which they could use in assessing the needs and concerns of the first-year teachers to which they were assigned. Teachers

reported in the workshop evaluation and in later interviews that the information provided through the training was interesting and helpful. They also found information in the support teacher notebook helpful, yet they did not complete the items in the notebook in writing due to limited time.

Section IV: The Principal's Role in Establishing a Good Beginning

During the first few days of the school year, principals typically have numerous duties and responsibilities related to the opening of school, not the least of which is providing teachers with the support they need to initiate their classes. First-year teachers, because of their lack of experience, often need special assistance from the principal and others to help with their transition into the teaching profession. Principals can do a number of things both before school starts and during the first few days of school that can help the first-year teacher through those first critical few days. In this section, information which was derived from the principals in the Model Teacher Induction Project related to providing assistance to first-year teachers during the first days of schools is provided. The suggestions included here are not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather are offered as some potentially useful ways in which principals can help first-year teachers have a good beginning both to the school year and to their career as a teacher. The following suggestions are grouped by those that can be attended to before the school year begins and those that should occur during the first few days of school.

Before the School Year Begins

Provide the first-year teacher with as much preparation time as possible. Almost all principals recognize the benefits of hiring new teachers as early as possible, and certainly there are many constraints that often prevent principals from being able to make hiring decisions as early as they like. However, once new teachers are hired, it is important to make the most of the available time before the school year starts. New teachers should be furnished with their course schedule, issued textbooks, and

provided access to other available instructional materials as early as possible to allow them as much preparation time as possible.

Be realistic about assignment of courses and extra-curricular duties. Principals often receive pressure from teachers with seniority to relieve them of the undesirable courses/classes and extra-curricular duties, leaving the most undesirable assignments for the newcomers. This situation, if allowed to occur, often results in the most difficult assignment being given to the person least prepared to handle it, the first-year teacher. The principal concerned about the induction of the first-year teacher, must use his/her "assignment power" to protect the first-year teacher from assignments that are too difficult for the novice to deal with effectively.

Assign appropriate support teacher. A support teacher can be enormously helpful to the first-year teacher. While many principals have relied on this strategy for years, new research indicates that specific criteria should be considered in this selection process. In addition to being a successful teacher who is willing to take on the responsibility of assisting a first-year teacher, other factors now appear to be important in the selection of a support teacher for a specific first-year teacher. Research suggests that it is helpful if the support teacher teaches the same subject and grade level as the first-year teacher, has a contiguous or nearby classroom, and has a compatible teaching ideology with the first-year teacher (Newberry, 1977; Huling-Austin, Barnes, & Smith, 1985). Also, it appears that a common planning period is beneficial to the support teacher/first-year teacher relationship. The principal should also make his/her expectations related to the role of the support teacher clear to both the first-year teacher and the support teacher. Depending upon the

nature of the support teacher role, it may be necessary to provide support teachers with special training and/or support related to this role.

Encourage teachers to interact before the school year begins. The principal should make an effort to introduce the first-year teacher to other teachers before the school year begins, especially the chairperson of the department or grade level in which the first-year teacher will be assigned. One of the MTIP principals reports that he encourages his teachers to have a departmental luncheon prior to the opening of school to become acquainted with the first-year teachers. In support, he offers to cover the expense of such a gathering through the school budget. He reports that as a result of such gatherings, teachers have often decided to have additional informal meetings for the purposes of planning for the upcoming school year.

Once the School Year is Underway

Conduct a new teacher orientation at the school. While it is not uncommon for principals to conduct an orientation session for teachers new to the school, it is somewhat unusual for principals to have a special session for first-year teachers only. This type of session is not only important for covering administrative procedures with which inexperienced teachers might not be familiar, but is also an opportunity for the principal to establish better rapport with new teachers and for first-year teachers to become acquainted with one another. It is also important for the principal to keep in mind that the first-year teacher is likely to be overwhelmed with the beginning of school and that this is probably not the best time to try to cover everything the first-year teacher will need to know for the upcoming school year. Principals in the MTIP schools had a special series of meetings for first-year teachers one morning a week for the first six weeks of school during which such things as counseling services for

students, the procedure for administering achievement tests, making contacts with parents, and other such matters were discussed.

Be highly visible during the first few days of classes. Principals in the MTIP schools recommended not undertaking formal observations of first-year teachers during the first days of school, but rather frequently and briefly dropping in on classes for the first few days. One MTIP principal said he spent the first few days of school dropping by all teachers' classrooms several times each day. Additionally, he made a special point of dropping in on every first-year teacher's classroom every period on the first day of school. He felt this gesture indicated his support of the teacher both to the teacher and to the students.

Send a personal note to the first-year teacher during the first week. One of the MTIP principals enthusiastically reports that he works very hard during those first few days of school to catch first-year teachers doing something right and then lets them hear about it with a handwritten, personalized note. The power of positive reinforcement has long been recognized, but too often is overlooked by principals during the beginning of the year crunch. The first few days of teaching are among the most difficult in a teacher's career and a brief, personalized compliment from the principal can mean a great deal to the first-year teacher at this difficult time.

Summary

The preceding suggestions were derived from what principals in the MTIP study schools' actions to assist first-year teachers with the beginning of school and information they shared in later interviews. Included among the suggestions are things that can be done prior to the opening of the school year and assistance that can be provided during the first few days of

school. Before the school year begins, the principal can provide first-year teachers with textbooks and materials as early as possible, make sure teaching assignments for first-year teachers are reasonable, assign an appropriate support teacher to assist the first-year teacher, and encourage experienced teachers to interact with first-year teachers prior to the opening of school. During the first days of the school year, principals should consider providing a special orientation session for first-year teachers, be highly visible to both teachers and students, and make a special effort to compliment the first-year teacher on something he/she has done well. Certainly, no principal can assume total responsibility for the success or failure of a first-year teacher. However, there are concrete ways principals can help first-year teachers through the first few critical days of teaching, and the suggestions provided here are offered to principals as ideas to consider in this important endeavor.

Section V: Conclusion

Because the first days of school are a difficult and critical time for first-year teachers, it is important that they be supported in a number of ways during this period. This support can take the form of formal training for first-year teachers before school starts and informal support from a designated support teacher and the building administrator. This paper has described the procedures for helping first-year teachers begin the school year used in the Model Teacher Induction Project. These include formal training for first-year teachers and support teachers in organizing and managing the classroom and for support teachers in diagnosing and responding to concerns of first-year teachers. These workshops are described in detail in Sections II and III of this report. Section IV, on the principal's role in establishing a good beginning, provides suggestions derived from the actions of principals in the MTIP study schools and information they provided in later interviews related to helping first-year teachers at the beginning of school. These suggestions are categorized into those things that can be attended to prior to the beginning of the school year and those that should be attended to during the first days of school.

Educators who assist first-year teachers will likely find some of the procedures used in the MTIP transferable to their own setting. It is not suggested that these suggestions and procedures are by any means the only things that can or should occur to assist first-year teachers with the opening of school. Rather, they are offered in hopes that others who work with first-year teachers might find them helpful and wish to consider them for possible inclusion in their own induction programs.

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